

Circ.: m. 224,746
S. 365,592

Front Page Edit Page Other Page

Date: APR 27 1961

A necessary agency

President Kennedy has assumed responsibility for the decisions which led to the ill-fated Cuba invasion. The effort to head-off the scramble to pin the blame on a scapegoat is commendable. But it doesn't seem to be working too well.

The general belief is that the President was ill-advised on the Cuba venture—and that the advice came from the Central Intelligence Agency. As a result, there are efforts to set up some system of closer scrutiny over the CIA. The suggestion to put the CIA under a strong congressional watchdog committee crops up most frequently these days.

The CIA presents a problem primarily because it is a cloak and dagger outfit that must operate with a great deal of secrecy. If its affairs were aired in public, it might as well close up shop.

Even if it is admitted, however, that the CIA offered faulty information and direction in the invasion affair, it doesn't necessarily follow that close congressional scrutiny would have made any improvement. The CIA must gather what information it can under very difficult circumstances and this information must then be evaluated with the best judgment possible. The information can be too skimpy or faulty or the judgment may not be what it should be. If so, CIA methods and procedures need strengthening.

But the danger in the current situation is that the CIA will be condemned for what happened in Cuba and, far from being strengthened, its hands will be tied and it will be so weakened that it will be totally unable to perform the functions for which it was set up.

Let there be no mistake about the need for an intelligence agency such as the CIA. And once that need is fully recognized, the efforts should be directed toward giving it the support needed to do the job.